

William G. Barker Business Building
263-265 South Third Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-209

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
109-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-209

WILLIAM C. BARKER BUSINESS BUILDING

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109-

Address: 266-268 South Main Street, Providence, Providence
County, Rhode Island.

Plat 16, Lot 80.

Present Owner: Anna Kepelman Estates.

Present Occupants: Skin Diving Equipment business on first floor,
upper floors temporarily unoccupied.

Brief Statement of Significance: This is an example of a business building from the
1820's, originally with a tailor's shop on the
ground floor with his dwelling on the upper floors.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- a. William C. Barker acquires the westerly part of
Plat 16, Lot 80, including the present building,
1826:

1819 Thomas Addison sells for \$300 to Thomas Howard,
cabinet maker, a certain lot of land containing
all the land that Gideon Hull purchased of John
Burroughs in 1793 (Deed Book 23, page 256) and
of John and Sarah Jenkins in 1794 (Deed Book 22,
page 637, 638, 639)...the part hereby conveyed
being same I bought of Joseph Hull in 1817 (Deed
Book 40, page 182) and of Elizabeth Hull in 1817
(Deed Book 41, page 83). - Deed Book 43, page 153,
in Providence City Hall.

1825 Thomas Howard sells for \$1200 to Solomon H Kenyon,
physician, this property "it being the same Estate
I purchased of Thomas Addison et al in 1819." -
Deed Book 50, page 51, in Providence City Hall.

1825 Solomon H Kenyon, sells for \$1000 to Amos Collins
a certain lot of land being the same I purchased
of Thomas Howard (Deed Book 50, page 51) together
with an UNFINISHED BUILDING and improvements. -
Deed Book 50, page 179, in Providence City Hall.

- 1826 Amos Collins sells for \$1774 a certain lot of land to Jonathan Pike...being the same Estate 1 purchased of Solomon Kenyon in 1825. - Deed Book 52, page 58, in Providence City Hall.
- 1826 Jonathan Pike, housewright, sells for \$1600 to William C. Barker, tailor, a certain lot of land on the E/ly side of South Main Street. Bounded: W by South Main Street 52-1/2'; N by heirs of Nicholas Power 60'; E by heirs of John Tillinghast 52-1/2'; S by gangway (Harding's Alley) that separates it from Richmond Bullock, being the same Estate I purchased of Amos Collins in 1826 (Deed Book 52, page 28). - Deed Book 52, page 32, in Providence City Hall.
- 1826 POLICY RECORD: William C. Barker, merchant tailor....E side South Main Street...Brick and stone...floor and roof laid in mortar...21' front and 32' front to rear...three stories high in front and 2 in rear...occupied for a dwelling house...Shop in lower story front...Mss. fire insurance records of the Providence Mutual Insurance Company at the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island, Vol. 4, policy #3229.
- b. William C. Barker acquires the easterly part of Plat, Lot 80 in 1836:
- 1816 William Holroyd administrator of the Estate of John Tillinghast, sells to Nicholas Brown and Thomas P Ives, highest bidders at public auction for \$430, a certain lot of land with buildings and improvements..the lot lies from N to S 52' and in length from E to W 60'. Bounded: W by house lot of heirs of Gideon Hall; N by Nicholas Power; E by highway and S by highway..it being the same lot John Tillinghast purchased of Abel Peavy in 1776 (Deed Book 20, page 395). - Deed Book 39, page 164, in Providence City Hall.
- 1836 Nicholas Brown, Hope Ives, Moses Brown Ives, Robert H Ives and Hope Brown Ives and Charlotte R and William G Goddard sell for \$1500 to Enoch Steere a certain lot of land on Well Street bounded: W by Wm C Barker and Enoch Steere 52'; N by Samuel G Arnold 60'; E by Well Street 52'; S by Harding Alley 60' with a 2-story Dwelling House standing thereon. - Deed Book 69, page 50, in Providence City Hall.

1836 Enoch Steere, merchant sells to William C Barker, tailor a certain lot of land bounded W by William C Barker 29'; N by grantor 60'; E by Well Street owned by grantor 28'; S by Harding's Alley 60'... meaning to convey part of a lot of land I purchased of Nicholas Brown et al in 1836. - Deed Book 69, page 134, in Providence City Hall.

c. Subsequent owners of Plat 16, Lot 80:

1843 William C Barker, merchant tailor, sells to Levi C Dexter, baker, for \$3400 a certain lot of land in the E/ly side of So Main Street 21'; S/ly by a gangway called Harding's Alley which separates it from the land of Richmond Bullock 110'; E by Well Street 28' and N by land of Enoch Steere 110', more or less, together with Dwelling House fronting on South Main Street (#120) and all other buildings and improvements thereon standing... it being the same estate I purchased of Johnathan Pike and Enoch Steere by their separate deeds as follows: The 1st in 1826 (Deed Book 52, page 32) and the 2nd in 1836 (Deed Book 69, page 134). - Deed Book 87, page 51, in Providence City Hall.

1854 Levi Dexter sells the above property to Richmond James for \$5000 the highest bidder at auction the above property...said lot is on the E side of South Main Street adjoining thereto and has thereon a Brick Dwelling House with Bakery in Basement and a Brick Barn in the rear of said lot. - Deed Book 135, page 289, in Providence City Hall.

1875 WILL: Richmond James..."I give and bequeath to my wife Lydia D. James all my Real Estate as long as she remains my widow, after which the same is to be divided among my heirs as provided by law." Wills Book 21, page 346, in Providence City Hall.

1894 William Eddy et al sells for \$4500 to Bernard Meehan that lot of land with all buildings and improvements on the E/ly side of South Main Street being the estate of which Richmond James died seized and possessed, the above grantors being the devisees and heirs-at-law of said Richmond James. - Deed Book 385, page 385, in Providence City Hall.

The property changed hands several times and was taxed to the following persons in the year designated:

1921 Anna Kopelman and Abraham Kopelman
1931 Anna Kopelman

1935 Mary A. Merewether wf George E
1945 Harris Kopelman
1950 Anna Kopelman
1955 Anna Kopelman Estates

2. Date of erection: 1825-1826

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
April 1962

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is an example of a brick business building from the 1820's, with a shop on the ground floor and an apartment for the owner on the upper floors.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: 21' (three bay) front x 32' deep, three-and-one-half stories, facing west. Small brick wing on east. Divided by brick party wall from adjoining building on north.
2. Foundations: Stone
3. Wall construction: Brick. South side partly stuccoed over.
4. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys in south end wall.
5. Openings;
 - a. Doorways: Later store front on first floor with cast iron posts. Entrance to stair hall to upper floors on north end of west front side.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Double hung windows, some six light sash, simple openings with brownstone sills and lintels. Shutter hardware, but no shutters.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof, asphalt roofing. Roof laid in mortar for fireproofing according to 1826 fire insurance record.
- b. Cornice: Molded wood cornice with drilled ovolo bed mold. Brick parapets at south gable end and part wall carry above roof.
- c. Dormers: Low monitor, full width of roof, with three over three light double hung windows.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: First floor rebuilt many times for different shops, front and back rooms in main block, one room in rear wing. Stairway on north side leads to small second floor hallway with stairs to third floor and attic. Second floor apartment has two rooms in main block plus rear wing. Third floor apartment has three rooms in main block plus rear wing. Three rooms in attic.
 2. Stairways: Straight run, enclosed stairway from entrance to second floor. Simple, L-shape stairs from second floor to attic, open string, turned rail, slender rectangular balusters.
 3. Flooring: Wood floors mostly covered with linoleum.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: plaster.
 5. Doors and doorways: Various types of later doors. Raised panel doors in simple molded frames in attic apparently original.
 6. Hardware: Miscellaneous later hardware.
 7. Lighting: Electric.
 8. Heating: Stoves. Original fireplaces in apartments closed.
- D. Site: Northeast corner of South Main Street and Harding's Alley, faces west, on sidewalk line on west and south sides, party wall on north side, run-down business district, lot slopes up to rear, small rear yard.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
April 1962.